

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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SUBJECT: SOVIET/AFGHAN ECONOMIC AGREEMENTS

REF: KABUL A-61

1. THE PARADE OF SOVIET/AFGHAN ECONOMIC AGREEMENTS CONTINUES.
SINCE JULY 2, FIVE NEW AGREEMENTS HAVE BEEN REPORTED AS CON-
CLUDED BY THE KABUL TIMES, BRINGING THE TOTAL SIGNED
BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES SINCE APRIL 27 UP TO 32. SEVERAL
AGREEMENTS HAVE ALSO BEEN CONCLUDED FOR CULTURAL EXCHANGES.

2. THE FOLLOWING AGREEMENTS HAVE BEEN SIGNED SINCE THOSE
REPORTED IN REPAIR.

A. ON JULY 3, AN AGREEMENT WAS SIGNED FOR THE IMPORT
FROM THE SOVIET UNION OF 10,000 TONS OF SUGAR; 20,000
TONS OF WHEAT; 60,000 TONS OF CEMENT; AND AN UNSPECIFIED
QUANTITY OF TEXTILES, TUBES, TIRES, AND BICYCLES.

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THE KABUL TIMES ARTICLE ALSO MENTIONED 3,100 TONS
OF COTTON AS PART OF THE AGREEMENT, BUT THIS
PRESUMABLY WILL BE EXPORTED TO THE SOVIET UNION
AS AFGHANISTAN IS A COTTON EXPORTER. THE TOTAL AMOUNT
OF THE AGREEMENT, WHICH APPARENTLY IS ON COMMERCIAL
OR BARTER TERMS, WAS \$18 MILLION. (THE SOVIET
PENCHANT FOR MULTIPLE SIGNINGS AND PUBLICITY WAS

CLEARLY EVIDENT IN THIS CASE, AS IT WAS SIGNED FIVE TIMES BY DIFFERENT AFGHAN GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND FOUR PICTURES OF THE SIGNINGS WERE FEATURED IN THE KABUL TIMES.)

B. ON JULY 4, THREE AGREEMENTS WERE SIGNED. THE FIRST WAS A PROTOCOL FOR FIVE YEARS OF COOPERATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE PROVISION OF SOVIET EXPERTS AND EQUIPMENT FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A COMPUTER CENTER AT THE POLYTECHNIQUE INSTITUTE IN KABUL. THE SECOND AGREEMENT CALLED FOR \$536,000 FOR EQUIPPING THE PORT AT SHER KHAN, AFGHANISTAN'S MOST IMPORTANT RIVER PORT WITH THE SOVIET UNION. THE THIRD WAS FOR A TECHNICAL AND FEASIBILITY STUDY OF FLUORITE RESERVES IN KANDAHAR PROVINCE.

C. ON JULY 11, THE SOVIET UNION CONCLUDED AN AGREEMENT WITH THE GOVERNMENT-OWNED HELMAND CONSTRUCTION COMPANY FOR \$9,734,000 IN EQUIPMENT. THIS WAS EVIDENTLY A COMMERCIAL PURCHASE.

3. IN ADDITION TO THESE AGREEMENTS REPORTED IN THE PRESS, RADIO AFGHANISTAN ON JULY 11 ANNOUNCED THAT AGREEMENTS HAD BEEN SIGNED RELATING TO THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE HAIRITAN BRIDGE ACROSS THE AMU DARYA RIVER.

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4. COMMENT: AS OPPOSED TO MOST PAST AGREEMENTS BETWEEN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF AFGHANISTAN AND THE USSR, SOME OF THESE RECENT AGREEMENTS ARE NOT ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE BUT, RATHER, COMMERCIAL PURCHASES OF SOVIET EQUIPMENT AND COMMODITIES. ALONG WITH INCREASING ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO AFGHANISTAN, THE SOVIETS APPEAR TO BE ENHANCING FURTHER THEIR POSITION AS AFGHANISTAN'S LARGEST TRADE PARTNER. DUBS

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